



# Gone & Almost Forgotten

*ASPHALTUM • SALTILLO • DAVIDSONVILLE*

*GILLAM • FOREST CITY • STOUTSBURG*

*GRAPE ISLAND • DUNNS • SURREY*

*PLEASANT RIDGE • MOFFITT • SHARON*

*PLEASANT GROVE • LEWISTON • LAURA • ZADOC*

The Lost Towns & Settlements  
of Jasper County, Indiana

by  
Beulah Arnott

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alogy

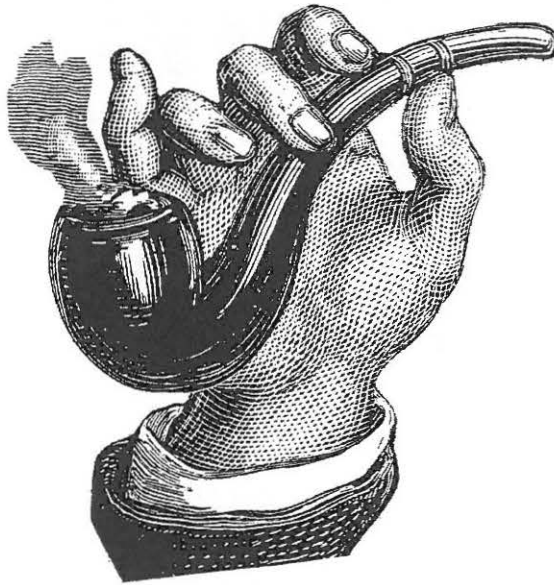
## INTRODUCTION

This part of Indiana, opened in 1832, basically attracted an agrarian society. The settlers established their homes over a wide area giving plenty of room to raise their crops and families. Horses were used not only for plowing, cultivating and harvesting, but also for transportation. Going anywhere by horse was better than walking but never the less very slow. Purchasing some necessities in the cities and towns was time consuming and small villages sprang up to serve the various communities. These villages usually contained a blacksmith shop, general store, a grist and saw mill and perhaps a school and church. When the railroads came into the territory small villages appeared along the route making it possible for the farmers to ship their produce to market. These little villages sometimes had elevators and cattle loading platforms in addition to the other conveniences already mentioned.

Jasper County was no different than the rest of the Midwest. In order that these little centers would not be forgotten entirely, I have attempted to tell what I was able to find out about a few of them. I may have left out some information for even these facts were somewhat hard to come by. For the convenience of the reader I have used the current county road numbers to help you locate these communities.

In thinking about the demise of these wonderful little community centers, I cannot help but point out that the same thing is happening to the main streets of many of our cities and towns today. The large corporations with their bargain prices are gradually destroying what once were the downtown areas. History does repeat itself.

Beulah Arnott,  
Jasper County Historian  
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## SALTILLO

The pioneer village called Saltillo was the first settlement in Jasper County. It was located on the old Rensselaer – Francesville Roads, now called Moody Road or County Road 100 South. The community was just south of the road and on the west bank of the Pinkamink River. In 1832, a man by the name of William Donahue, a trapper, came to Jasper County and located the Pinkamink River (Ryan's Ditch). He found a plentiful source of beaver fur and thus remained. He was the first white settler to come to Jasper County. Others soon followed and the settlement of Saltillo was established with Mr. Donahue acting as the Justice of the Peace. Saltillo became the first seat of justice and the first voting place in Jasper County. Saltillo had a post office, feed mill, and the trading post. Because it was on the Williamsport to Winamac Post Road there were daily pick-ups of the mail.

Many of the farmers were growing tobacco at this time and a tobacco factory was built at the settlement. Later when the tobacco business had been abandoned the building was moved to Francesville and became an annex to the Francesville Commercial Hotel.

After the town of Newton, later to become Rensselaer, had been established and the railroads did not come to Saltillo the settlement vanished.

Mr. Donahue moved to Hanging Grove Township. He continued to participate in the political life of the county until his death. He is buried in a chicken yard on the premises now owned by Cheryl Wicker located at the west edge of McCoysburg in an unmarked grave.

There is nothing left of the settlement of Saltillo, only the well kept cemetery with about fifteen graves.



### DAVIDSONVILLE

The little village of Davidsonville was laid out by Moses E. and Lewis Davidson and was recorded on June 18, 1850. This village was just up the stream from the crossing at Saltillo. It was part of the drainage from the Gifford Marsh. The location was selected because of the possibility of establishing a mill on the pond known as the Haddox Pond.

The village consisted of two blocks and contained one street and 19 lots. In the town was a flourmill, sawmill, grocery store, shops and whiskey distillery. It was sometimes referred to as Haddox or Tailholt.

The fascinating name of Tailholt came about in the following manner. One day a horse broke through the bridge and required the efforts of several men to free him. While some of the men took hold of the horse's tail and lifted others shoved a board under him and finally freed him. After that incident the name of Tailholt was almost invariably used.

The distillery was soon abandoned and the mill was changed to steam power. The reason for the change was due to the fact that the large volume of water coming down from the marsh broke the dam and flooded the surrounding farmland.

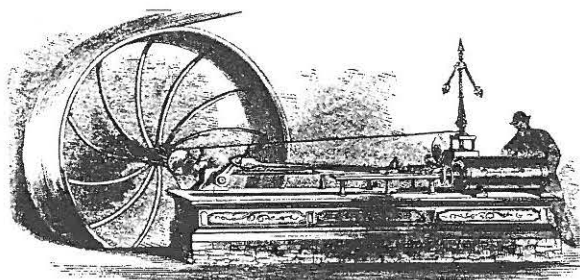
There was a small cemetery up on the clay hill just west of Davidsonville called the Tailholt Cemetery. There were only a few graves there. Sometime in the early 1920's the stones were pulled from the ground and thrown down the hill. The farm came into the possession of the William Kupke family in 1933. Rick Kupke remembers finding the stones and carrying them back to their original spot. This place was in the barnyard just west and a bit north of the present day house. The one stone that was readable stated that it was the grave of Henrietta, daughter of C. and C. Lewis, died October 1 1854, age 8 months and 10 days. The Civil War records in Medaryville show that C. Lewis (probably Chester) and J. Hurley (probably James) are also buried there.

This village, like Saltillo, might have survived had the railroad seen fit to come near. The Daryl Culp family is now living on this farm and it is owned by his father-in-law, Ed Walters.



## GILLIAM

Before leaving Gilliam Township I would like to mention another little settlement located on Highway 14 and County Road 430E. John Gilliam established his home here and had a trading post and post office. Mail was delivered three times a week. The original Independence Methodist Church was started in Mr. Gilliam's home. Later a log church was built and eventually the church moved to its present location.



## THE CHICAGO AND WABASH VALLEY RAILROAD

The Chicago and Wabash Valley Railroad was more commonly called the Gifford Railroad or the Onion Belt Line. Benjamin J. Gifford had come to Jasper County from Kankakee Illinois and was successful in draining much of the Kankakee Marsh. Having done this he saw the need for a means whereby the farmers could send their produce to market. He set about building a railroad, which he hoped would run from Chicago to Lafayette. It was started in 1898 but never reached its fully intended route. It was completed from McCoysburg to Dinwiddie in Lake County. Several stops along the road became small villages.

The stops starting with McCoysburg were as follows: McCoysburg, Randle, Della, Pleasant Grove, Lewiston, Newland, Gifford, Laura, McGlinn, Zadoc, and Kersey. It then crossed the Kankakee River and continued into Lake County. We will deal with only those stops that became villages.

## PLEASANT GROVE (MOODY)

Pleasant Grove was established in about 1900. The name was changed to Moody in 1914 in honor of Charles Moody, and outstanding farmer and community leader of the time. Moody Store was the main building at this stop and served as a post office, general store, and depot. There was a grain elevator at Moody and a small stockyard. Moody was located between County Road 150 East and the Brown Cemetery on the Moody Road. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Markin and their daughter Mary ran the store for a number of years.

The store continued to serve the community until sometime in the 1940's. There is nothing there now to indicate that there was ever such a place.

## LEWISTON

Lewiston was located near Meridian Road and Highway 14. It had a hotel, cattle loading platform, elevator and a scale house. It did not last long after the demise of the Gifford Railroad. The George Hoeflerlin family lived in the hotel for a number of years after the town was no more. Nothing is left to mark where the town was.

## LAURA

Laura was located at the intersection of County Roads 600 North and 200 West. It was established as a village in 1917 when the store opened. The Schrum pickle tanks were located nearby. The store closed in 1922.

## ZADOC

Zadoc was located on the northwest corner of 100 North and 300 West. Here the Gifford Railroad crossed that of the "Old Coalie" Road that ran from Dunns to Fair Oaks in Jasper County. "Old Coalie" was actually the Indiana and Great Southern Railroad. It's main function was to haul coal from the mines in Southern Indiana. At Zadoc there was a station that handled the business of the two railroads.

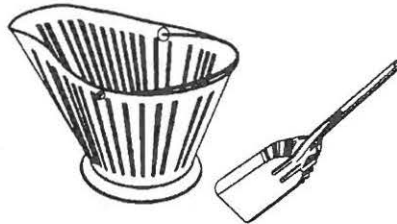


## ASPHALTUM

Asphaltum was located at the corner of County Roads 200 East and 600 North. In the 1890's a farmer, when drilling a water well, struck an oil deposit. By 1900 about 100 wells were operating and producing 400 barrels of oil daily. This land belonged to Mr. Gifford and he built a million dollar refinery. He also constructed a four-mile spur line from the settlement of Gifford to Asphaltum. In addition he purchased several tank cars to carry oil to the main line. However by 1904 the wells petered out one by one and the track was removed. The farmers used what oil oozed from the almost dry well to lubricate their farm machinery.

## FAREWELL GIFFORD RAILROAD

Mr. Gifford passed away in 1914. His railroad was sold to the Monon and by 1936 it was no longer in service.



### PLEASANT RIDGE

The village of Pleasant Ridge came into existence about the time of the completion of the Monon Railroad in 1878. It was located on County Road 150 West and State Highway 114 just south of the railroad. A store was built on the west side of the county road. Eventually there were two houses, a schoolhouse, and an American Express office that was on the north side of the tracks. The store was a general store that sold, among other things, coal and fertilizer to the farmers around there. Mr. Clifford Parkinson ran the store for many years. The store also acted as a post office where the neighbors could pick up their mail. Stockmen of the area shipped livestock to Chicago from Pleasant Ridge. There was an elevator nearby which was owned by the Farm Bureau Cooperative, now owned by Northwest Indiana Grain. The school was closed in 1917. The store was closed in 1943. The buildings were torn down and the 20 acres on which the store stood was sold to the Talbert Trailer Factory. People still speak of this area as the "Ridge."



### SURREY

Surrey was probably built in the 1880's. It is located on County Road 100 South and 860 West. There were two houses, a grocery store, two elevators, and a blacksmith shop. The Monon passed through Surrey and it was a milk stop for farmers sending milk to Rensselaer. John Lonergan told me that they used to send sulfur water to Chicago for medicinal purposes. The store was operated by Estel Myres and before that by his father-in-law. They lived in the two houses that were part of the village. Charlotte Myres Konovski told me she rode the train to Rensselaer to school in the late 1920's. There were stock yards there and near the back of the store was a small shed that was used as a cooler to hang the butchered meat. The store, which was the central building, literally fell down. In the 1950's the Lonergans used the lumber to build a chicken house. The stone cooling shed is still standing. There was a sign that was erected in the ground near the tracks that let you know you were passing through Surrey. This sign is in the possession of the Ramp Family now. Surrey is completely gone.

## MOFFITT

Moffitt or Moffitt Switch as it was sometimes called was located on County Road 600 North between County Roads 800 and 900 West. There was a switch located there making it possible for the trains on the "Old Coalie" line to pass each other. This was the same line that passed by Zadoc. The railroad maintained passenger cars that were often used by teachers and students to get to and from school. There was a grade school nearby that was closed in 1928. In 1937, Russell and Dorothy Parks purchased this building, and they have made a residence of it and continue to live there. The railroad was taken out in 1941. Gas and oil had replaced coal as a source of energy, and many of the farmers who used this stop to ship grain now used their own trucks to haul the grain to market.



## SHARON

Sharon was located on State Highway 16 and County Road 280 West. Charles Slaughter lived there and had a Blacksmith Shop. Mr. Slaughter was not only a blacksmith but widely known as a gunsmith. Sharon became a neighborhood gathering place. When it became obvious the automobile was replacing the horse, Charles and his son Otto moved the operation to Rensselaer and started an auto repair business along with the blacksmith shop. Otto worked at dredging for a time before joining his father. Near their place at Sharon there was a school that became known as the Slaughter School.

## FOREST CITY

Forest City was located between County Roads 1100 and 1200 West and just north of 1200 North. It was by the New York Central Railroad. It was a switch for the trains and there was a cattle-loading platform. Besides cattle they also shipped square bales of hay cut from the marsh nearby. The hay was sent to the stockyards in Chicago, as were the cattle. It was quite a chore to load the heavy square bales into the boxcars.

## STOUTSBURG

Stoutsburg was located where Sculley Square is now. It had a cattle-loading platform and shipped the square bales of swamp hay to Chicago. There is a street just at the north edge of Sculley Square that is called Stoutsburg Street. Today on County Road 1100 North, south of Kankakee Valley Middle - High School is a nature preserve called STOUTSBURG NATURE PRESERVE.





### GRAPE ISLAND

Grape Island, located north of DeMotte, was on the west side of Highway 231 between the highway and the Kankakee River, has many conflicting stories. One story is that Explorer Robert LaSalle, who was in this area between 1678 and 1682, left some men there who had brought grape vines from France. This is a fantastic story and hardly believable because LaSalle and his men did not come directly to the Kankakee River from France. They resided for a time along the St. Lawrence River until they heard about the possibility of getting to the Pacific Ocean by traveling through the Great Lakes, the Kankakee River and on from there. Would grape vines have lasted from the time they left France until they got to what became Northern Jasper County? Another, more likely story is that the French from Canada and also from Vincennes established a fur trading post on the island. They brought grape vines. The Indians brought furs that they traded for jewelry. According to the legend this lasted only about one year. All of this took place before Indiana even became a state. Legends are about all we have to go by today.

The Island was a great place for hunters and fishermen. One story was that a young man sloshed through the marsh to the island and set fish lines baited with corn. The wild ducks came and ate the corn and the fishhooks got caught in their throats, thus the man was able to catch them without firing a shot.

### DUNNS

Dunns was another little settlement. All I can find is that it was a small settlement of residences, possibly used for summer homes or hunting and fishing lodges. When Northern Indiana Public Service came to Jasper County to build Schaffer Generating Station they located very near this spot and Dunns is no more.

## IN CONCLUSION

I am sure there were more little neighborhood centers that were important to the early inhabitants of our county. The information here is an example of what an interesting place they have in Jasper County's history.

The purpose of this research was four-fold:

1. To record the history of these places,
2. To point out that as the life-styles of the people changed the centers were no longer able to furnish the needs of the people and therefore then disappeared;
3. To bring to our attention the heritage we have received form the former citizens of the county;
4. To make us aware of our obligations to future generations.

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